

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 HA-05 EB-08 AID-05 IGA-02 TRSE-00

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-----003135 101931Z /50

R 091600Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9602

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGUI 2676

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CT, US,

SUBJ: PRESS COVERAGE OF CORONATION

REF: BANGUI 2651, BANGUI 2666

1. AT THE AIRPORT DEPARTURE CEREMONIES FOR VISITING PRESIDENT MOBUTU, I TALKED AT LENGTH WITH INTERIOR MINISTER POTOLOT ABOUT THE DECEMBER 7 PANEL DISCUSSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN AMERICA (BANGUI 2666). I SAID I WAS DEEPLY DISTURBED AT THE TONE OF THE BROADCAST AND THE INTEMPERATE ATTACK ON THE UNITED STATES. WE DID NOT OBJECT TO ANY GOVERNMENT POINTING OUT OUR OWN FAILINGS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AREA, AND PRESIDENT CARTER HAD MADE CLEAR THAT HE DID NOT CONSIDER THE UNITED STATES TO BE TOTALLY BLAMELESS IN THIS REGARD. HOWEVER, IT WAS INCUMBENT ON THE CRITICS TO GET THEIR FACTS STRAIGHT AND NOT MERELY TO RAKE UP LEFTIST PROPAGANDA.

2. POTOLOT RESPONDED THAT HAD HE BEEN ON THE PANEL HE WOULD HAVE BEEN EVEN TOUGHER. HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN DEEPLY INCENSED BY A BROADCAST ON FRANCE INTER WHICH HAD REPORTED A STATE DEPARTMENT DECISION TO CANCEL ALL AID BECAUSE OF CONCERNS ABOUT CORONATION EXPENDITURES AND HUMAN RIGHTS
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VIOLATIONS. I SAID TO POTOLOT THAT I COULD NOT SPEAK FOR FRANCE INTER. OUR DECISION TO SUSPEND CONSIDERATION OF NEW PROJECTS HAD BEEN TAKEN IN SEPTEMBER IN LIGHT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION LAST SUMMER AND NOT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CORONATION, WHICH WE CONSIDERED AN INTERNAL MATTER FOR THE CAE. I EXPLAINED THE PROCESS OF THE NOON BRIEFING AND SPELLED OUT FOR HIM WHAT THE SPOKESMAN HAD SAID. I NOTED I HAD MADE THE

SAME POINTS TO THE EMPEROR ON THE AFTERNOON PRECEDING THE BANGUI PANEL DISCUSSION.

3. THE DAY BEFORE AT MOBUTU'S ARRIVAL I BRIEFLY TACKLED RADIO AND TELEVISION MINISTER YANGONGO AND EXPRESSED MY DISSATISFACTION AT HIS DISTORTED AND TENDENTIOUS PRESENTATION THE NIGHT BEFORE. BEFORE FLEEING TO THE SAFETY OF THE VIP LOUNGE, HE SAID THAT THE GOCAE HAD HAD TO RESPOND TO USG ATTACKS. HE HAD INTENDED TO INCLUDE ME IN THE PANEL DISCUSSION TO MAKE SURE THE US POSITION WAS HEARD. I COMMENTED WRYLY THAT IT WAS A LITTLE LATE TO TELL ME.

4. ON THE AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 9, ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER DAVID ZOKOE CALLED ME TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ON THE INSTRUCTION OF THE PRIME MINISTER TO COMPLAIN THAT I HAD SPOKEN DIRECTLY TO MINISTERS YANGONGO AND POTOLOT ABOUT THE TV ROUND TABLE RATHER THAN MAKING A DEMARCHE THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN EXACTLY WHAT HAD HAPPENED, TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE USG HAD NOT CRITICIZED THE CORONATION AND TO EXPRESS OUR DESIRE FOR CONTINUED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE CAE. I ALSO LEFT HIM IN NO DOUBT THAT WE WERE DEEPLY CONCERNED WHEN THE UNITED STATES WAS ATTACKED BY A MINISTER OF A FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT. IF THE MINISTERS WITH WHOM I HAD SPOKEN HAD BEEN OFFENDED BY MY SHARP WORDS, I HOPED HE WOULD CONVEY MY REGRETS TO THEM AND TO THE PRIME MINISTER. MY WORDS HAD ONLY REFLECTED MY DISQUIET AND UNHAPPINESS WITH THE INAC-
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CURATE AND BIASED CRITICISM OF THE UNITED STATES. ZOKOE SAID HE APPRECIATED HAVING MY EXPLANATION AND STRESSED THAT THE CAE WISHED TO HAVE GOOD -- EVEN PRIVILEGED -- RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. I CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT NOW THAT I HAD HAD A CHANCE TO MAKE A FORMAL PROTEST TO THE GOCAE, I CONSIDERED THE MATTER CLOSED. HE RESPONDED THAT HE DID ALSO.

5. BY TACKLING VARIOUS MINISTERS ON THIS SUBJECT I HAVE STIRRED UP A HORNET'S NEST OF INTEREST IN OUR POSITION. THE POINT OF OUR CONCERN HAS NOW BEEN REGISTERED SUFFICIENTLY EMPHATICALLY THAT WE SHOULD NOW CONSIDER THE MATTER CLOSED. ZOKOE MADE NO EFFORT TO DEFEND THE ROUND TABLE AND INDEED WAS ALMOST DEFENSIVE WHEN I CITED FOR HIM SOME OF THE MORE OUTRAGEOUS ADJECTIVES AND INSINUATIONS OF YANGONGO. IF WE ARE TO AVOID FURTHER INCIDENTS OF THIS KIND, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ALL WASHINGTON AGENCIES STICK TO THE LINE THAT THE CORONATION IS AN INTERNAL MATTER FOR THE CAE AND THAT PAST AID DECISIONS WERE NOT RELATED TO IT. ONCE AGAIN IT IS AP WHICH HAS GOTTEN US IN TROUBLE SINCE IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY THEIR STORY (STATE 291396) THAT FRANCE INTER USED TO SUCH DAMAGING EFFECT.
QUAINTON

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